

In Hiding (1657–)

Secret Practices and Bastian's Prophecies

St. Mary of the Snows (Twenty-Six Martyrs Museum)

Bastian's Christian Calendar (Sotome Museum of History and Folklore)

Maria Kannon Statue (Sotome Museum of History and Folklore)

In the mid-seventeenth century, Japanese Christians started to practice their faith in secrecy. In Sotome, which includes the two villages of Kurosaki and Shitsu, the teachings of two people in particular came to form the central part of Christian thought and practices. The first was San Juan, a Portuguese missionary steeped in legend. The second, Bastian, was a gatekeeper of a Buddhist temple born in the south of Nagasaki who became San Juan's disciple. During the 1650s, at a time when persecution was fierce, these two missionaries traveled together to hidden Christian communities.

Bastian transmitted four prophecies before his death. Thereafter, throughout their 250 years of concealment, the Christians of Sotome firmly hung onto the prophecies of Bastian that foretold better times.

Bastian's Four Prophecies

The first forecasted that after seven generations, those reckoned as Bastian's children would have their souls saved from distress.

The second predicted that confessors would arrive in black ships after which everyone would be able to confess every week.

The third described a time when the hidden Christians would no longer need to hide but would be able to openly sing Christian hymns.

Finally, the fourth conveyed that when Christians meet unbelievers on the road, the unbelievers would give way to them.